MEGA-CITIES AND THEIR MAYORS

Interviews with Three Municipal Leaders

LES GRANDES VILLES ET LEUR MAIRE

Entretiens avec trois chefs municipaux



GÉRALD TREMBLAY
Maire de Montréal
Fusionnée en 2002



MEL LASTMAN
Mayor of Toronto
Amalgamated in 1998



PETER J. KELLY
Mayor, Halifax
Regional Municipality
Amalgamated in 1996

As mayors of three of Canada's largest cities, Mel Lastman, Gérald Tremblay and Peter Kelly are at the forefront in the administration and governance of a relatively new urban model for Canada – the mega-city. In candid interviews with *Canadian Issues*, each offers great insight into his city's successes and failures to date, and peers forward to what challenges might lie ahead.

En tant que maires de trois des plus grandes villes du Canada, Mel Lastman, Gérald Tremblay and Peter Kelly se trouvent au cœur de l'administration et de la gouvernance d'un modèle urbain relativement nouveau pour le Canada – la mégaville. Dans des entrevues qui ont étés accordés à *Thèmes canadiens*, chacun d'eux nous offre un regard sincère et franc sur les succés et les échecs vécus jusqu'à date et sur les défis qui pourront se présenter dans le futur.

What were your primary concerns when you began your mandate of governing a mega-city?

Lastman Amalgamation was initiated by the province. In a referendum held by the former municipalities in Spring 1997, over 70% of citizens voted against the province's amalgamation proposal. People are our greatest strength. We needed to make sure amalgamation worked for everyone to build the public support required to achieve our vision. Polls conducted in 2000, two years after amalgamation, showed that 66% believed that amalgamation of the former municipalities provides better government than the previous two-tiered system (*Toronto Star/EKOS*). Despite the increasing good will from our citizens, we were dealing with provincial downloading at the same time as the effects of amalgamation. We were very concerned that the lack of proper alignment of the increased responsibilities mandated by the province and our limited financial capacity would make the city's financial situation unsustainable and prevent us from realizing our full potential. This has proved to be the case.

Tremblay Comme nous ne vivions pas un début de mandat « normal », nos préoccupations et les défis qui se présentaient à nous sortaient tout autant de l'ordinaire. Au niveau des préoccupations, la première qui nous animait, et qui nous anime constamment, était d'assurer aux citoyennes et aux citoyens de la nouvelle Ville de Montréal la livraison de services de qualité tout en n'augmentant pas la charge fiscale globale des contribuables montréalais. Il était absolument hors de question d'accepter, sous quelque forme que ce soit, une baisse dans la qualité des services. Un an après la naissance de la nouvelle Ville de Montréal, nous pouvons affirmer que nous avons réussi à remplir cette importante attente des Montréalais.

Un immense défi qui se présentait en ce début d'année 2002 était de compléter harmonieusement l'intégration des quelques 29 000 employés de la Ville. Six mois après le début de l'année, plus de 95 % des employés étaient intégrés au sein d'un poste correspondant à leurs compétences et qualifications. Encore là, donc, le pari a été tenu.

Kelly Perhaps the issue of greatest concern was fear of the loss of community identity in the amalgamated municipality. Since the municipality was formed in 1996 through a provincially initiated amalgamation of Halifax, Dartmouth, Bedford and Municipality of Halifax County which included 196 distinct communities, I felt one of the greatest challenges was to ensure that all communities felt confident that their distinct identities were preserved and protected within the larger political/governmental unit.

The rapid growth and development within the municipality requires sound planning for the infrastructure this growth requires. Ensuring rational growth according to planning standards is important. Having a core of economic activity on a peninsula also keeps transportation issues at the forefront.

Another important issue was the development of wastewater treatment facilities, which would once and for all stop the flow of raw sewage into Halifax Harbour. This $350 million dollar project is now underway. Over the next 5 years this project will see the completion of three sewage treatment facilities.

What are the major challenges to governing a mega-city?

Lastman With a population of 2.5 million people, Toronto is the fifth largest city in North America. Our $6.8 billion gross 2002 operating budget is larger than the budgets of most Canadian provinces. Our challenges include trying to operate within a provincial legislative framework that lacks the flexibility required to meet the responsibilities of large local government; relying on local property taxes that are regressive, don't keep pace with changes in the economy and can't respond adequately to changing human service needs and growing infrastructure pressures; and keeping the City accessible and open to the concerns of diverse communities.

Tremblay One of the major challenges of governing the new city of Montreal is maintaining the personalities of all 27 boroughs while developing a shared sense of identity. We are focused on managing a city with a population of 1.8 million and promoting the cultural, economic, social and sustainable development of the metropolis. Another primary area of concern is accelerating the city's growth while ensuring existing wealth is shared among all Montrealers.

Kelly The geography of our regional municipality can be daunting. We are the approximate size of Prince Edward Island. While most people perceive that the vortex of economic activity takes place near the central core, we must remember that the issues of the most rural and remote community are equally important.

Quelles ont été vos plus grandes réussites jusqu'à date ? Vos plus grandes déceptions ?

Lastman There have been many successes. We have continued our role as the economic engine of the country, successfully competing not with other Canadian cities, but with cities around the world, at the same time striking a balance between social development, environmental health and economic growth. Toronto, along with other great Canadian cities, has stimulated growing recognition that urban issues and concerns are central to the very future of our society. This recognition is reflected in the renewed interest shown by the private sector, by academics, by various new and old community organizations and increasingly by federal and provincial governments. There is a commitment of $1.5 billion by all three levels of government to fund the infrastructure of our waterfront revitalization, a $12 billion development that will transform Toronto's waterfront. We were able to maintain a zero tax increase in the first term, in the face of restructuring and service harmonization costs, provincial downloading and limited federal assistance. Now, after much resistance, the provincial and federal governments have returned to helping fund transit and our long term credit rating has gone up. I hope the other levels of government will also be able to co-operate regarding desperately needed affordable housing and other vital services that can't be adequately supported by property taxes alone. And we have harnessed the diverse ideas of our many communities into a unified, long-term vision for the City.

Some disappointments: We have not been able to secure the legal and financial powers we need to meet our unique responsibilities and needs. We will be continuing to press other levels of government to allow us to build on our competitive advantages and achieve our full potential. Despite the fantastic support of our people and the work of our Bid team, the IOC didn't award Toronto the 2008 summer Olympic Games. Nevertheless, we are continuing our commitment to waterfront revitalization, to sport and recreation by young and old alike and to continuing Toronto's leading role in culture and tourism. And while we have made considerable progress, there are still too many young people without a voice in society, too many citizens feel unsafe and despair over having an affordable place to live continues.

Tremblay Notre plus grand succès est certainement d'avoir tenu, tel que promis, le Sommet de Montréal. Ce grand rendez-vous a été l'occasion pour les Montréalaises et les Montréalais de s'approprier leur ville.

Dès les premiers mois de l'année, nous avons tenu plusieurs engagements. Plusieurs de ces réalisations bénéficient grandement aux jeunes montréalais, parce que la jeunesse a toujours occupé de place de choix dans nos préoccupations. Ainsi, les étudiants montréalais bénéficient dorénavant d'un tarif réduit lorsqu'ils se déplacent dans le réseau de transport en commun de la Société de transport de Montréal. La ligne bleue, desservant notamment l'Université de Montréal, a vu ses heures de service augmentées. La génération montante montréalaise pourra maintenant participer à la hauteur de ses convictions et de ses énergies à l'édification d'un Montréal meilleur : le Conseil jeunesse de Montréal a été implanté à cet égard.

Au niveau des ratés, certaines problématiques nous sont apparues beaucoup plus difficiles à régler que nous l'aurions voulu. Nommons, par exemple, la problématique de l'itinérance urbaine. Avec la démolition d'abris de fortune sous



Downtown Toronto, Ontario – photo courtesy Tourism Toronto

un viaduc pour raisons de sécurité, nous avons bien vite réalisé que l'itinérance a plusieurs visages et que chacun d'eux appelle une réponse différente, une intervention distincte. Loin de nous décourager, cette réalité nous stimule seulement à travailler avec encore plus d'acharnement pour apporter à ces hommes et à ces femmes le secours que la société a le devoir moral de leur porter.

Kelly I would have to emphasize our fiscal management as a major success. We have come forward with a budgetary surplus for the past three years and we are projecting another surplus this year. We have reduced our debt load by 42 million dollars over the past four years. Our strong economy and the growth of our assessment roles has allowed us to implement multi-year financial strategies. We have decreased our tax rate for the past three years a cumulative total of 3.4%.

I am very disappointed that we have had little success in forging a new governance relationship with the province. Halifax Regional Municipality has 40 % of the population and generates about half of the GDP of the province. I believe there is duplication and overlap in the provision of services between the two levels. Our citizens deserve the most cost effective government possible. In a properly rationalized governance relationship, HRM and the province would each deliver, exclusively, the services they are best equipped to deliver efficiently. Thus far few of our suggestions in this regard have been implemented.

We have not yet been able to complete our transportation strategy at this point. Citizens have made it very clear that it is very important to improve transportation infrastructure to meet the pressure of rapid growth.

Has the governance of minority communities been made more difficult by the creation of a mega-city?

Lastman The City's policies on access and equity are broad-based and respond to all groups facing disadvantage. The amalgamation of the 7 municipal structures provided an opportunity to expand and harmonize the various access, equity and human rights policies that were in place prior to January 1998. The Transition Team recognised this and requested the new City of Toronto to establish a Task Force to undertake this task of harmonization. This work was completed and reported in 1999 to City Council which adopted 97 recommendations which formed the City's Action Plan on Access, Equity and Human Rights. As a result of these recommendations City Council also established 5 Community Advisory Committees and 4 Issue Based Working Groups to provide formal mechanisms for the community to provide policy advice to City Council. There are about 100 residents who belong to these Advisory Committees and Working Groups.

City Council has also decided to prepare a plan of Action for the Elimination of Racism and Discrimination. A consultative process has just been completed by a Council Reference Group which is composed of chairs of the Council's Advisory Committees and Working Groups. This consultation report, *Just Do It!* will be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer to the preparation of the City's Plan.

Tremblay Non. Chacune des anciennes villes fusionnées dans la nouvelle ville a un ou des représentants au sein du Comité exécutif et/ou du conseil municipal. De plus, la création des arrondissements et le fait que ceux-ci sont responsables des services dits de proximité permettent aux communautés locales un accès direct aux instances décisionnels.

Kelly I don't feel it has become more difficult. It is an important challenge, however, to ensure minority communities don't become lost in the bigness of this amalgamation. All communities deserve respect and our recognition of the issues and challenges which are their priorities.

There were concerns among citizens of the now-defunct cities that the loss of their communities would result in a loss of empowerment over

local issues. How has your administration addressed this?

Lastman Our six Community Councils are committees of City Council that consider the City's business of a local nature at the community level, and provide a forum for local input into Council's decision-making process. Their responsibilities generally include making recommendations to City Council on local planning and development matters, as well as neighbourhood matters including traffic plans, parking regulations and exemptions to certain City bylaws (i.e., sign, fence, ravine and tree-by-laws).

Tremblay Our administration's philosophy is to manage the city on the principles of decentralization. We have tried to ensure the borough councils are as autonomous as possible. Decentralization offers several advantages including allowing the boroughs to maintain control over local issues including permits, snow removal and sports and recreation. As well, encouraging the maximum amount of autonomy for the boroughs fosters a sense of community and empowerment among residents.

Kelly This issue has not arisen in the past two years. With the increased resources we were able to provide all of the communities which were amalgamated, greater access and input in shaping the decisions and framing our future came to all of our citizens. Our awareness of the danger of a loss of community identity coming in to amalgamation ensured that we were very proactive in building in a grass roots public forum into everything we do. We have instituted five community councils which meet regularly and through which citizens have an opportunity to participate in discussions of local community based issues with their councillors and municipal staff.

De quelle manière avez-vous tenté de démocratiser votre administration en invitant des opinions de représentants de différentes régions de la ville ?

Lastman On March 2, 1999, the City adopted four key principles of civic engagement: collaborative decision-making; accessibility; continuous improvement in citizen participation; and community capacity building. The Strategic Plan of the City of Toronto also identifies a strong commitment to open, accountable, transparent and participatory political decision-making.

The City of Toronto launched the civic engagement initiative – *Building the new City of Toronto: Reflections on Civic Engagement*. As part of this initiative, the City organized a series of seminars that explored effective ways for citizens to actively participate in political decision-making and the life of the community. In September 2000, City Council adopted the summary of findings from these seminars.

On the December 9, 2002, we launched another pilot project on civic engagement; it is a workshop entitled "If you love this City". This workshop will examine what individual citizens can do to make the City a better place to live.

We hope that these types of open, citizen-centred and inclusive consultations with citizens will help the City's future direction in civic engagement. We also envision that the City of Toronto will become a much more accessible government through our e-city initiative. This initiative focuses on mechanisms and technology to pay municipal bills online (e-business), to obtain information about city services (e-services) and to engage in dialogue with other citizens via chat groups etc. (e-government).

Tremblay Il est question plus haut du Sommet de Montréal. Nul doute que cet événement fut un moment névralgique de la démocratie participative que nous instaurons dans la nouvelle Ville de Montréal. Plus de 3 000 personnes ont participé directement aux sommets d'arrondissements, sectoriels et au grand sommet des 4, 5 et 6 juin 2002.

Par ailleurs, nous avons mis sur pied 7 commissions du conseil municipal, qui permettent toutes aux citoyens intéressés de participer et de faire valoir leur point de vue. Nous avons mis sur pied, dans les 27 arrondissements, des comités consultatifs d'urbanisme, qui permettent eux aussi aux citoyens de s'exprimer sur les projets de développement qui touchent leur milieu de vie. Nous avons investi la présidence du conseil de pouvoirs accrus, afin notamment de stimuler et de faciliter la participation des Montréalaises et des Montréalais aux délibérations démocratiques. Nous avons mis sur pied, un conseil jeunesse et un conseil interculturel, dédié à ces clientèles et qui rempliront notamment la lourde tâche de favoriser la participation des ces personnes.

Kelly Whenever we are faced with an important or defining issue, we provide a well-advertised and easily accessible public forum in several strategic locations, which tend to be convenient centres for the community around them. I have also put in place the mayor's community round table discussions. Grassroots meetings in school gyms and church halls provide everyone with an opportunity to be heard in a comfortable and familiar environment.

We also use a variety of publications to get the word out quickly and invite comment. Our citizens are never shy about letting us know what is on their minds.

The municipal amalgamations took effect with many promises. Are there any among these that you would like to see amended?

Lastman The Ontario Government's policy on municipal amalgamation has been described as an example of "keeping a promise that was never made". In 1996, the province commissioned a study to estimate the potential savings and costs associated with Toronto's amalgamation. Comparing the estimates to the actual costs and savings reveals that savings from consolidation were under-estimated, immediate savings from efficiency gains were over-estimated and one-time and annual costs were under-estimated.

Tremblay No.

Kelly Yes. Unfortunately, many promises were made when looking through "rose-coloured glasses" at an idealized amalgamated municipal unit. We are now in a position to analyze the promises in terms of the reality of amalgamation. This would be an exercise worth doing.

Will the merger allow your city to successfully address its fiscal concerns?

Lastman It's important to remember that prior to Toronto's merger, 73% of gross expenditures were for pre-



Halifax, Nova Scotia – photo courtesy HRM / J. d'Entrement

viously amalgamated services of the former Metropolitan government, the major ones being social services, police and public transit. This left only 27%, or $1.5 billion of the city's gross expenditure available for further amalgamation. At the same time, additional responsibilities and costs have been downloaded to the city by the province as part of the realignment of services, estimated at $276 million in 2001 alone.

In addition, there have been one-time transition costs estimated at the end of 2000 to be $275 million. These include staff exit costs, retraining costs, business information systems, facility modifications, and negotiating new collective agreements. Net service and user fee harmonization costs for major cost services (e.g. solid waste collection and recycling, winter maintenance etc.) have been held to a modest $18 million despite the tendency in other jurisdictions to see service levels rise to the highest level of amalgamating municipalities.

On the savings side, by 2000 the city had realized $136 million in annual savings, most of this achieved through a reduction in staff positions. This exceeded a provincially commissioned KPMG study that estimated the City might achieve $82 to $112 million from amalgamation. Executive management positions have been reduced by 60% (from 381 to 154) and management positions were reduced by 34% (from 1,837 to 1,204). In addition further consolidations have been made in facilities, business systems etc.

However as mentioned earlier, the short-term impact of amalgamation is of minor importance as compared to the need for fundamental legislative and fiscal reforms on the part of the provincial and federal government to ensure our long-term financial sustainability.

Tremblay La taxation devient, dans ce nouvel environnement, un puissant outil d'équité entre les différents secteurs de la ville. Nous comptons harmoniser la fiscalité sur le territoire sur une période de 10 ans, comme la loi le prévoit. Cette harmonisation permettra une plus grande équité en terme de charge fiscal supportée par les contribuables par rapport au niveau de service reçu. Dans Montréal-Nord, par exemple, nous avons instauré la cueillette sélective, pratique qui n'était pas en place dans cette ancienne ville.

Un autre avantage indéniable de la naissance de la nouvelle ville est que l'harmonisation de la fiscalité permettra d'orienter notre compétitivité vers les grands centres urbains nord-américains plutôt qu'entre les différents secteurs de l'île, comme c'était le cas avant. Bref, dans le nouveau contexte, la fiscalité devient un levier de développement global, avec des retombées réparties équitablement sur le territoire.

Finalement, dans notre gestion de la fiscalité, nous allons respecter certains principes : l'autonomie locale, l'équité fiscale, la neutralité fiscale et la simplicité. Nous rechercherons aussi la stabilité en évitant les variations brusques des comptes de taxes.

Kelly Yes. The critical mass created by amalgamating our communities is indeed having the effect that it is now possible to address fiscal concerns earlier and more completely.

Provincial officials have been under pressure to give their largest cities more powers. Are there sign of progress on this front?

Kelly As I mentioned earlier, this is one of my disappointments. HRM has the potential to deliver most services and create some infrastructure within our boundaries in a more timely and cost effective way than any other level of government. However, the limitation of the legislation and traditional role relationship with the province and federal government are in the way. The province created amalgamation but failed to give the municipality the legislative and fiscal tools to do the job.

As a member of the Big City Mayor's Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, I have been very active in lobbying of late to gain recognition that the federal government can deal directly with large municipalities in creating infrastructure partnership. They don't need to work

through the province to a municipal partnership. We do see some movement on the part of the federal government in this direction. Manitoba and British Columbia recently passed legislation which allows Winnipeg and Vancouver to operate more autonomously and therefore more directly with the challenges they face.

Tremblay Lors du Sommet de Montréal en juin 2002, le gouvernement du Québec s'est engagé à conclure un contrat (appelé le contrat de ville) avec Montréal. Ce contrat de ville doit prévoir de nouvelles sources de revenus pour la nouvelle ville. Les négociations entourant le contrat de ville ont toujours lieu et devrait se conclure en début d'année 2003.

Lastman There is growing recognition on the part of many provinces that Canada's largest cities need a new deal that provides them with access to financial resources in line with their responsibilities. On August 19, 2002 Premier Eves announced to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that he is prepared to "consider other methods of revenue sharing among municipalities, the province and the federal government, provided that they are equitable, make sense and are responsible to taxpayers". However, subsequent messages from the Province suggest that they will only move decisively on this front if and when the "vertical fiscal imbalance" between the province and the federal governments is addressed (i.e. the feds pony up a lot more money for health care).

Ontario's new Municipal Act, which came into effect on January 1, 2003, is responsive to the language and concepts of municipal empowerment that have been in use in other provinces and territories for a number of years. For example, it talks about natural person powers; broad spheres of municipal jurisdiction; and a willingness to consult with municipal government. Unfortunately, the Act doesn't really deliver on its promise to empower cities. It doesn't do nearly enough to provide large cities, like Toronto, with the legislative tools and flexibility we need to carry out our responsibilities in an effective, innovative and efficient manner. The Act still takes a "one size fits all approach" to dealing with municipalities in Ontario, and it appears to have been drafted for the smallest, least sophisticated municipalities in the province.

In contrast to Ontario's new *Municipal Act*, the new Liberal government in BC appears to be developing municipal legislation that signals a dramatic departure from the traditions of top-down control, prescription and paternalism that have traditionally characterised provincial-municipal relations in Canada. Specifically, BC's *Community Charter legislation* will reinforce in law that municipalities are an order of government in the province.

Quel rôle le gouvernement fédéral peut-il jouer afin d'améliorer la condition des villes du Canada ?

Kelly The infrastructure partnerships mentioned above are one way. Another would be to put pressure on the province to create a new charter for large amalgamated municipalities. This charter would create a new model of governance, which would reflect all the advantages of large amalgamated municipal units.

Tremblay Les municipalités constituent une juridiction provinciale. Par ailleurs, le gouvernement fédéral est un important propriétaire foncier à Montréal, étant notamment propriétaire du Port de Montréal. Le gouvernement fédéral, notamment par sa contribution aux programmes de subventions aux infrastructures municipales, est un partenaire de premier plan de la Ville de Montréal. Par ailleurs, dans les dossiers de développement économique majeurs, le gouvernement fédéral participe aux efforts concertés visant à accélérer la création de richesse.

Lastman The federal government can enhance its role as a funder, partner, and enabler of municipal governments by augmenting direct investment in cities, developing new revenue-sharing arrangements, and providing more frequent and meaningful opportunities for federal-municipal consultation. Some specifics:

Direct Investment: Commit to providing cities with access to long-term, stable financing to support and invest in public transit, affordable housing and infrastructure – and give cities a seat at the table where these federal programs are designed and priorities are set.

Revenue Sharing: Provide cities with greater access to tax revenues that are generated in cities (e.g. portion of the federal gas tax or GST) and/or extend the GST exemption for municipalities.

Consultation: Invite municipal representatives to participate in the federal budget process; Meet regularly with municipal representatives to review federal policy and programs that have a direct, substantial impact on cities – i.e. immigration and immigrant settlement. Consult with municipal representatives before developing federal policy that has a significant impact on cities.

Apply an Urban Lens: Develop administrative and political structures that apply an "urban lens" to federal policy and programming.

Many of Canada's mayors have stressed the importance of labour peace, and easing animosity and confrontation with municipal unions. Where is your city on this critical issue?

Kelly We do our utmost to maintain a healthy productive workforce where unionized employees feel they are treated fairly in the compensation they receive and the working conditions at their workplace. We want our employees to be proud to work for the municipality and to show this pride in the way they do their work. All of our managers receive extensive labour relations training. They are trained to properly manage within a collective agreement. In addition we have labour/management committees which meet monthly. This allows the proactive handling of issues that crop up and doesn't allow a build up of unresolved issues. We also emphasize workplace safety through our safety committees.

Tremblay Dès son arrivée au pouvoir, l'administration Tremblay a rencontré les représentants syndicaux pour leur proposer une nouvelle approche afin de conclure les premières conventions collectives de la nouvelle ville. Cette approche s'est concrétisée par une annonce commune des parties syndicales et de la ville lors du Sommet de Montréal en juin 2002. Les négociations sont toujours en cours.

Lastman Amalgamation has created tensions in our workforce. It has served as a catalyst to review wages that had been frozen or received very limited increases since the early 1990s. It also meant that some employees doing similar work were being paid at different rates. We have worked closely with all the unions involved to manage the transition in a way that was fair to city employees, while being responsible to our taxpayers. We have been able to accomplish a great deal through good will, hard work and compromise. Unfortunately, a number of issues have needed to be resolved through arbitration, sometimes accompanied by job action. With the latest arbitration award, I am sure we can now move forward to continue delivering the services Torontonians need and expect.

A generation from now, what will we be saying about municipal mergers?

Kelly A generation from now we will be wondering why the financial means to fulfill the promise of amalgamation was not framed along with the act of amalgamation. Progress could have come even more quickly if we were properly empowered.

Tremblay Initially, people expressed many concerns about municipal mergers. We listened to their concerns and have worked very hard to preserve the quality of life of citizens. With our adminsitration in power, people will say it was possible to build a city that respects the true values of its citizens and is developped to its full potential in partnership with the other major metropolises of the world.

Lastman Municipal mergers are neither inherently good nor bad. Each municipal merger proposal should be evaluated on its own merits. This was true 10 years ago, this is true now, and my guess is that this will still be true in a generation.

As with any kind of major organizational change, municipal mergers create new challenges and new opportunities. Hopefully, we'll be able to look back on how amalgamation unfolded in Toronto and say: "We made a few mistakes along the way, but Toronto is still one of the greatest cities in the world – it's a prosperous, safe, vibrant urban centre, with a responsible and responsive municipal government.

What do you see for your city in the decades to come? What must be done to make it happen?

Kelly With the very rapid cycle of growth we are presently undergoing, we have to carefully plan and budget for infrastructure to maintain the quality of life we now enjoy. A very real possibility on the transportation horizon is the development of a commuter rail service. Certainly, the resources are at hand to maintain and even enhance our quality of life. The challenge will be for us to seize this opportunity and to convince our provincial and federal governments to grant the municipality the autonomy to meet its challenges quickly and directly.

Tremblay Nous négocions présentement les conventions collectives des employés de la nouvelle Ville. L'harmonisation des 29 conventions collectives en vigueur sur l'île constitue un travail colossal. La Loi 170 indique que cette harmonisation doit se faire à coût nul pour les contribuables montréalais. Parallèlement, lors du Sommet de Montréal, nous nous sommes engagés, avec nos partenaires syndicaux, à développer un nouveau cadre de relations de travail, davantage axé sur le partenariat. Nous tenons à cette nouvelle approche car elle nous permettra de travailler conjointement à l'amélioration des services que nous offrons aux Montréalaises et aux Montréalais.

Par ailleurs, la nouvelle Ville de Montréal est devenue une métropole de classe mondiale. Son environnement compétitif s'est considérablement élargi et nous devons revoir nos façons de faire pour y prendre la place qui nous revient. Notre objectif est aussi ambitieux que réalisable : hisser Montréal dans le peloton de tête des grandes villes nord-américaines. Pour y arriver, nous devons ajouter de la valeur aux interventions et aux projets de développement qui sont actuellement proposés et à ceux qui sont à venir. L'administration municipale se propose d'être proactive dans le domaine du développement économique et fait appel à ses partenaires pour qu'ils développent une approche intégrative avec les autres projets et acteurs de développement. Les projets de développement montréalais devront dorénavant répondre à deux critères de base : ils devront accélérer la création de la richesse pour mieux la répartir et ils devront également contribuer à l'amélioration de la qualité de vie des Montréalaises et des Montréalais.

Finalement, notre plus grand défi est sans aucun doute de faire de Montréal une ville encore plus ouverte, encore plus juste pour tous. Nous travaillons quotidiennement à l'amélioration des milieux de vie montréalais et l'amélioration de la qualité de vie des Montréalaises et Montréalais. Notre défi est donc simple : faire encore plus et le faire encore mieux.

Lastman Although we face some very real short and medium-term challenges, I think millions of people will still be proud to call Toronto home 10, 20 and 30 years from now. In many ways, Toronto is already a model for cities around the world, and there's no reason why this can't continue to be the case. Toronto's cultural, social and economic diversity will continue to be its greatest strength. To ensure that Toronto achieves its full potential and continues to be a place that people from around the world want to call home, three things need to happen:

(I) We need a "new deal" from both the province and the federal government that provides the City with financial resources and legislative tools in line with its responsibilities. Simply put, the current financing arrangement between the three levels of governments is fiscally unsustainable for the City. A better alignment of resources and responsibilities is desperately needed.

(II) Current and future generations of this City's political leads need to adhere closely to the City's new Official Plan – a plan which will allow the City to effectively manage its growth.

(III) We need to develop more robust mechanisms to co-ordinate planning, growth, transportation, waste management, and watershed management issues with all of the communities that comprise the GTA. It's time we all recognize that Toronto's long-term success depends on the success of the GTA, and vice versa.